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ABSTRACT

Testimony from a former head of a communication and theatre department attests to the difficulty in recruiting new faculty with graduate faculty credentials for a department without a doctoral program. Typically, the so-called "stars" of an academic discipline gravitate to large universities and their doctoral programs. Therefore, those involved in recruitment and retention of graduate faculty in non-doctoral programs need to address various problems confronted by those programs (including funding, release time, and research) and suggest solutions to those problems. The biggest advantage of non-doctoral programs may be that the expectations of quantity (and sometimes quality) of research productivity are at a different level than those for doctoral programs. Successful retention may come down to the ability of deans and department chairs to be trustworthy champions of monitoring, mentoring, and money. (RS)

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Recruitment and Retention of Graduate Faculty in the Non-Doctoral Graduate Program

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Abstract

Typically, the so-called 'stars' of an academic discipline gravitate to large universities and their doctoral programs. Various problems (such as funding, release time, research, etc.) associated with recruitment and retention of graduate faculty in the non-doctoral graduate program are addressed with possible solutions suggested. In addition, the advantages of the non-doctoral graduate program over the doctoral program are examined.

Recruitment and Retention of Graduate Faculty in the
Non-Doctoral Graduate Program

I was Head of the Art, Communication and Theatre Department at our university (West Texas A&M) for a five year period. In that time period, I was involved with ten different searches for faculty members in Communication. With a fairly active master's program in Communication, we always started our searches with high hopes of finding faculty members with graduate faculty credentials. In only one case (out of ten searches) was I able to lure such a faculty member.

The problem seemed to be one primarily of money, i.e., we could not afford the credentials we wanted. As such, in nine out of ten cases, we could only afford to hire non-tenure track Instructors. These Instructors have contributed greatly to our department, but they simply cannot qualify for graduate faculty status, direct theses, etc.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (August 25, 1993) there is, in fact, a significant pay differential for doctoral versus comprehensive institutions (p. 34). Specifically, the average salaries of all full-time faculty members reflect the following:

	Doctoral Institutions	Comprehensive Institutions
Professors	$66,780	$54,760
Assoc. Prof.	47,220	43,680
Asst. Prof.	40,110	36,160

Thus, at the professor rank, there is a $12,000 difference, and at the associate and assistant ranks there is nearly a $4,000 differential. Data here appear

consistent with my experience -- that is, the "money factor" may hurt non-doctoral program graduate faculty recruitment.

Other Recruitment and Retention Problems

If you can overcome the initial "financial barrier" to recruiting a graduate faculty member, there are, of course, other problems for non-doctoral programs: library facilities, caliber of students, financial support (for research), colleagues, teaching load, and prestige (in general). This all sounds pretty dismal. So, why would anybody in his or her right mind (with graduate faculty credentials) "accept" a job and then "stay" at our university?

Matier (1990) found that the most influential factors regarding a faculty member's decision to join the faculty of a research/doctoral institution were as follows:

- institutional, department, and associates reputations
- research opportunities
- teaching assignments/load
- career advancement opportunities
- congeniality of associates
- rapport with departmental leaders
- teaching/research load
- library facilities

Again, the research here appears to be consistent with my intuition. Specifically, doctoral programs have certain significant tangible and intangible "perks."

Assuming that those of us in non-doctoral programs can still "recruit" good faculty to our universities, how do we keep them? Addressing the general issue of "facilitating the retention of new hirees," Borisoff (1992) provided six initiatives.

1. Regularly scheduled orientation meetings
2. Adjusted teaching and service assignments
3. Mentoring
4. Financial support
5. Revaluation of tenure guidelines
6. Probationary tenure reviews (pp. 4-5)

Additionally, Barge and Musambira (1992) explored the importance of the chair-faculty relationship in higher education. Among their findings it was suggested that "faculty members may base the assessment of their relationship with their department chair in large part to the degree in which they trust their department chair" (p. 73). It appears that monitoring, mentoring, and the establishment of a chair-faculty trusting relationship are among our key "retention" factors.

But, how do those of us at non-doctoral programs counteract the supposed "fame and fortune" associated with being among prolific researchers at highly regarded doctoral programs? Erickson, Fleuriet, and Hosman (1993) indicted some of the "prolific publishing" reports that have surfaced in our journals in recent years, e.g., Edwards, Watson, and Barker, 1988; and Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary, 1989, 1992, and 1993. Their indictments attempt to dispell four myths:

1. Prolific publishing constitutes scholarship
2. Prolific publishing garners prestige
3. Quantity is preferable to quality
4. Research is more rewarding than teaching (pp. 334-336)

If you happen to agree that certain myths indeed permeate the essential doctoral program mentality, then the non-doctoral program may be to your liking.

Advantages of Non-Doctoral Programs

As many of you I'm sure are aware, there are some advantages to being a faculty member at a non-doctoral graduate program. For my taste, the biggest advantage here is that of research expectations. That is, at many non-doctoral institutions the expectations of the quantity (and sometimes quality) of your research productivity are at a different level.

Although a distinctly different research expectation is not always the case at non-doctoral programs, it certainly is at our institution. For example, publishing a textbook or presenting a paper at a conference would be very helpful to your annual research productivity review at our university. If one were teaching at many doctoral granting institutions, this may not be the case.

As a result of different research expectations at many non-doctoral institutions, you may be allowed to focus more of your attention on the teaching and service aspects of your job. Of course, if you see yourself as more of a teacher than a researcher, this can have all kinds of personal and professional advantages, e.g., you could develop and refine new teaching areas, etc. Similarly, you could focus more on community, university, and professional service contributions.

All in all, I think that the primary issues here involve priorities and, to some extent, abilities. If your priorities and abilities are such that you want a more evenly weighted academic existence (regarding research, teaching, and service), then the non-doctoral program may be to your liking. Conversely, if research is your clear preference, then you may find many non-doctoral programs to be somewhat frustrating to your career goals.

Conclusions

I think that the most obvious solution here for faculty members looking at doctoral or non-doctoral universities is to do so with their "eyes open." Do your personal and professional goals coincide? Additionally, can you meet the expectations? Moreover, I think that Deans and Department Heads (in particular) need to be, from the outset, exceedingly clear about such goals and expectations.

In terms of actual recruitment and retention matters, I would offer two closing suggestions for the non-doctoral program. Be an enthusiastic "recruiter" for your program, but also be an honest one regarding some of the possible limitations previously discussed. On the other hand, successful "retention" may well come down to your ability to be a trustworthy champion of what I call the three Ms: monitoring, mentoring, and, alas, money.

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